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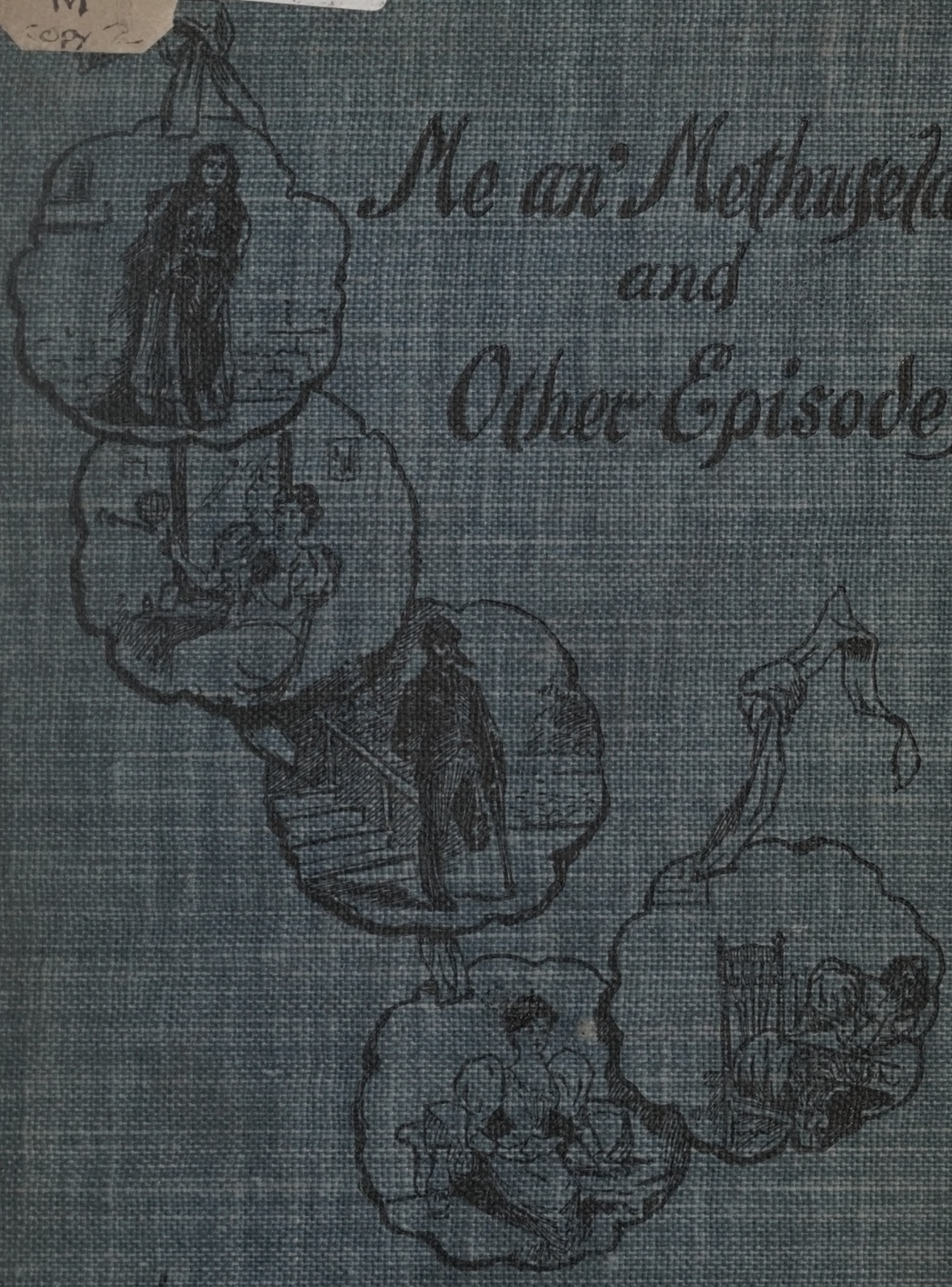
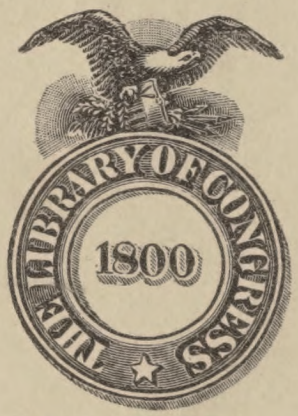


Me an' Methuselar and Other Episodes

by

Harriet Ford.



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"ME AN' METHUSELAR."

ME AN' METHUSELAR
AND OTHER EPISODES
BY HARRIET FORD

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IT is a pleasure to dedicate this little volume to Miss Evelyne Hilliard, for whom the episodes were originally written, and whose clever interpretation of them has led to their publication

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Me an' Methuselar, . . .	9
At the Photographer's, . .	17
Terra Incognita, ...	25
Dr. Bean, Dentist, . . .	29
Between the Acts, ...	39
The Matrimonial Manœuvers of Major Musket, ...	47
An American Girl at an English Dinner Party, ...	61
A Young Maid and—An Old Maid, .	69
A Fragment, ...	79

ME AN' METHUSELAR

Me an' Methuselar.

[Scene. An alley leading to the stage entrance of a theater. Enter a very ragged child carrying a pet cat. She looks cautiously around as if afraid of being followed. Her dress is draggled and she wears an old shawl. Her hair is tangled and unkempt.]

NOP—nobody seed us, Methuselar. Nop—no—o—op. Thought sure Pike Cotes 'u'd guess what we wuz up t', an' foller. Oh—oo! Oh—oo! That wuz a stunner, wa'n't it, Methuselar? Sit down sudden 'nough that time, didn't we? Oh—oo! Did I smash his 'ittle empty stomach? Did I? Drat Daddy! He drank yer milk, he did. Meuw, meuw! Ye're right, Methuselar. He's a stingy, skimpy, skinny old stealer. That he is. But you know you stayed out on the roof half the night—yes, you did, yes, you did. O'course ye're shamed of it now ye're starved an' sober. Daddy got in first an' swiped your drink, he did. There's no ust o' me talkin'. You an' Daddy are dead set t' keep out nights. Yes, you be, yes, you be! Never you mind. We'll buy a

whole river o' milk sometime or 'nother, an' you shall jest swim in it, Methuselar.

We've had a tough time of it to-day, haint we? This 'ere's me first 'round these diggins. Don't b'lieve nobody never thought o' this afore. My eyes! but I wus 'fraid Pike Cotes 'u'd catch on an' sneak after us, but we skipped him. This must be the stage door. We'll jest set here an' sing, Methuselar.

"On Sunday night
'Tis my delight
An' pleasure don't you see,
With all the boys
An' all the girls—"

Can't seem t' rouse a shadder, Methuselar. Meuw! You knowed this wus the spot fer us. Yes, you did, yes, you did. Didn't you wink yer grazy eyes, an' wag yer fuzzly tail when I sat an' thought it up? Now you knowed from the start, Methuselar, that you had t' toddle 'long a me, an' you 'greed to it, yes, you did, you did. You heard Pike Cotes tell how he got in the the-a-tur t' run erruns an' things, an' he said as how all the acturs an' show folks jest dote on cats, an' 'u'd have a fit if one turned agin 'em. Why, puss, they'd no more dare walk by me an' you 'thout givin' us a penny fer luck—goodness! Here comes one.

" She's my sweetheart,
I'm her Joe,
She's my Annie,
I'm her beau.
Soon we'll marry
Never to part—"

He can't be an actur, Methuselar. Why, he looked right at you an' you never phased him. That song did it, Methuselar. It's a Jonah, ain't it? Let's try anodder.

" The heart bowed down by grief an'—"
We're a sad pussy cat,
A hungry pussy cat,
An' a sad, sad, sorrowful girl.

Here comes somebody else. Better luck this time, Methuselar.

" On Sunday night,
'Tis my delight,
An' pleasure don't you see,"
Oh thank you, lady,
Thank you lady,
Da de da, ah de dee—e.
" There's an organ in the parlor
To give the place a tone,
An' ye're welcome ev'ry evenin'
To Maggie Murphy's home."

My eyes! Methuselar, ain't it grand? Hain't seen one afore t'-day, have we? You caught her,

Methuselar. Yes, you did, you did! She's 'fraid you'd bring her everlastin' bad luck. Guess she don't know it's 'bout all you kin do t' hustle fer yourself 'thout mousin' 'round hoodooin' other folks. You couldn't do much hoodooin' on such an awful empty stomach, could you? Brace up, Methuselar! Here comes a swell.

Oh sir, jest a penny t' help a girl, me an' puss are starvin'. Jest a—

Oh thank you, sir! Thank you!

A nickle, as ye're a cat with whiskers, Methuselar! You done it, you done it! Yes, you did—yes, you did. Yer first trip, too, aint it? You'll soon be up t' the tricks. You do look hungry, Methuselar, but I'll have t' train you in looks. Now jest t' think, if you could squeeze out a few tears while I sung, my eyes! wouldn't we get rich! Here comes a beautiful lady. Hush up an' I'll try a new dodge on 'er.

Oh lady, can't you give a poor girl a lift? I do so want t' see you act in the play. If I could only git a few more pennies, me an' a friend 'u'd clap you out o' sight. Jest a few pennies, a quarter, or a dime, or a nickle 'u'd do, lady. Oh thank you! Much obliged, much obliged! God bless you, lady!

Ho, ho, Methuselar! How's that? Ain't you

proud o' yer mudder? That's the way t' catch 'em. Pike put me on, he did, the night he an' me went to the play, an' he tole me t' help him raise the roof whenever his bloomin' benefactor so much as put his nose on the stage.

Methuselar, I don't think we need to sing. Anybody jest t' look at us 'u'd know we wuz poverty-struck. Now I'd know you was the minit I seen you. Well, I have t' sing t' make folks look I s'pose. Oh, see this gentleman, Methuselar! I guess an upperatic song 'll catch him.

"She's plain Molly O,
Tender an' sweet.
She's plain Molly O,
An' my heart is at her feet.
She's plain Molly—"

Oh, thank you, sir. Oh, thank you! Thank you! My name? Oh—Ginny Mur—Genavarur Murkin's my name, sir. Yes, I have t' sing or I guess we'd starve. I'd 'a' sung better fer you jest now only I'm frightful hungry. Rats ain't in it with me an' Methuselar. Methuselar? This 'ere's Methuselar. We're pards. Purty name? Yes, we think so. Pike Cotes, he named him. He's 'bout the only friend I got, Pike is. He goes t' Sunday School, Pike does, an' he tole me, he says,

"Now if you'll name that 'ere cat Methuselar, he'll live to be as old as this 'ere house, see?"

Our house? Well, 'taint ourn, but we live on top. Bordun's saloon's on the first floor, you see, an' Granny Midders an' her son's on the second. Tom Grimy an' his pard's the third, an' Daddy an' me an' Methuselar's fourth back. That 'ere saloon's the spite o' me an' Methuselar's life, 'cause Dad he—he can't—can't get by it nohow. He's richer'n we are, but he has t' drink. He can't help it somehow. He's purty weak lately. Me an' Methuselar think he's 'bout drowned out.

What, sir? What, sir? Sing—in—the the-a-tur? Yes, sir! Yes—sir—yes—sir! Sing in the the-a-tur? My eyes! You don't think they'd have me? You do? Sing in the the-a-tur! Sing—in—oh sir, may I try? I'll sing—nobody never heard the way I'll try for it, sir. Not alone? Yes, I know sir,—in the chorus, yes, sir. To-morrow? Yes, sir. Ten o'clock sharp, sir. Yes, I'll fix up a bit, sir. Oh, thank you, sir. Look for you? Yes, sir. Good-bye, sir. Good-bye, sir—Good-bye!

Sing—in—the—the-a-tur! Methuselar! Me—Ginny Murkins. You shall hear, Methuselar, you shall, you shall. My! but I'll be skart, won't I? but I'll sing, Methuselar. What'll Pike say now,

what'll he say? Methuselar, you shall have a pouncin' bowl o' milk this minit, an' Granny Midders shall help me get a gown. Methuselar—think of it! Sing in the the-a-tur—the the-a-tur—the the-a-tur!

[Exit laughing and crying].

AT THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S

At the Photographer's.

[SCENE: A photographer's studio.

OCCUPANT: Charles Bolton, a young artist, who is struggling to establish a profession and maintain existence. He loves everything in nature but a rainy day, scorns nothing in science but a pocket camera.

Voice from adjacent dressing room.]

"ARE you ready for me, Mr. Bolton?"

[Out bursts a lovely dash of color. Anyone but a photographer would have been bewildered.]

"I'm in such perplexity, Mr. Bolton, whether to have a bust taken or a full figure. That picture you made of Miss Reynolds was simply regal, but then she's so tall. I want mine quite as effective only totally different of course. I thought of descending a staircase *à la* Princess Louise, don't you know. I'm sure, though, that Miss Carlton had one taken after that idea. She would declare I was imitating her, and that would never do. One must be original if nothing else, you know. Perhaps I'd better have only a head taken. Which view is best—profile, three-quarters or full face?

Do tell me! Mightn't I lean my head on my hands after the fashion of Marie Baskirtseff? How was it? Like this? Do you think my hands are pretty enough? Oh dear, no! I haven't had my nails manicured for more than a week. That wouldn't be at all *comme il faut.* Now couldn't I use these lorgnettes effectively? Isn't this rather *distingué*? Walk around? Oh, I see, so as to get my train in place. Strange, trains never will fall gracefully when one wants them to. Will this do? Shan't I raise my eyes—so? Ready? Wait until I take a long breath. There! Through? Well, that's a weight off one's mind. Being photographed is such a serious thing to me. One is always fancying what one's descendants a thousand years hence may be saying over one's likeness. Do you ever wonder how photographs will be taken then? Of course you do. Some totally different process, I presume. Some one waiting? Oh, I beg pardon!"

[Enter Aunt Mary Crowfoot from Indiana.]

"Is this the place to git your picture took? I thought I'd like to s'prise my niece—the one as was named arter me. I s'pose I'm gittin' rather 'long in years, though, to indulge in sich frivolities. In my time we used to think daguerreotypes

was 'bout the nicest things that ever could be, but I s'pose them new fangled notions are 'way ahead. Where shall I sit? You think I'd look better without my bonnet? You do? Well, I don't look quite the same as I did when I was young. In them days folks used to say—well, it ain't my place to speak o' sich things. Look pleasant? Why certainly. Enough? You don't mean to say you're through? Well, I never! I must say I'm very much obliged. It wasn't half so bad as I thought it would be. Good arter noon."

"Are you engaged, sir?"

[Enter the elegant Mrs. Wiloughby. Bolton perceives with trepidation her outraged expression.]

"Mr. Bolton, I hope you appreciate the fact that my allowing my daughter to grant you a sitting was an unusual favor. I am surprised, sir, that you should so far take advantage of my kindness as to place her picture in your show window. It is against my wishes that my daughter's beauty should become a subject of common comment. I hope you will rectify the mistake—it must have been a mistake—at once, or I shall be compelled to withdraw my patronage."

[Exit Mrs. Wiloughby with overwhelming dignity. Enter Miss Sylph, a flower from Madison Square Garden.]

"Dear me, who is that butterfly of fashion. She's kept me waiting long enough. I didn't dare to sit down, these togs do wrinkle so. Is your process instantaneous? I want to poise on one foot—you know, like that antique messenger boy—what was his name? Never mind racking your brain for it. I can't stand more than three hours on three toes, you know, so just fly around. How's this? Alright? Go ahead. Over? Well, I am relieved! Let me tell you, I've a gorgeous dress for the next ballet. I'll come around and pose for you as a summer's day or something. You can get it copyrighted and make your fortune. Mind you don't forget my royalties, though. Send for the costume? Oh no, I'll bring it around in—my purse. Ha, ha! Ta, ta—ta, ta!"

[Enter Mollie Griffin, fresh from school.]

"Oh, Mr. Bolton, do take my picture as soon as you can. I've to make a Philopena present, and the only unique thing I can think of is to have a five dollar piece cut and my picture painted on the inside. Of course, I must get a good photo first. Do you suppose I can stop laughing long enough? I wan't something awfully piquant—like this. Oh dear, I never can keep my face straight. Wait a minute until I get serious. Now—

no, not yet! Do tell me something pathetic. Do you know, I believe it is that camera pointed at me like a miniature cannon that upsets me so. Can't you take my picture with something else? No? Oh dear, now I'll try. May I wink? Have you taken it? Oh, I am glad. Now I can laugh all I like once more. When can I have the proofs? Hurry them, won't you? I'm so much obliged. Good-bye!"

"May I come in?"

[Enter Bridget Mahone.]

"Luk at that now. Ain't she the swatest young thing? Shure an' if yez can't make a purty picture o' her, yez can't o' me. Now how long will it take yez to put Bridget Mahone in a photagraph? Sit down? To be shure I'll sit down, an' what do you suppose I want to sthand up for? Howld sthill? As sthill as iver I can. Och! an' what be yez stickin' in the back o' my head? To kape me stidy? Perhaps yez be after thinkin' I'm too fable to howld up me own head. Luk at that card? The loikes o' that? Faith an' ye moight give me a respectable appearin' gintleman to luk at. Is it over? Shure an' that was aisy. Well, an' how long will you keep me a-waitin' for the loikness? Two wakes? Ye don't mane that? Bless me

sowl, I must disappint Patsy, the darlint (me cousint). I'm after lavin' him on the corner thinkin' as how I bring the picture in a minute. Two wakes? Well I niver heard the loikes o' that. Good day to yez! Good day to yez!"

Half past three! Mrs. Simpson is due with a baby. Experience had painfully taught him that babies require peculiarly entertaining surroundings when being photographed. He had, accordingly, armed himself with a tin whistle, a highly colored doll that had manifestly resented being danced up and down repeatedly by one of its arms or legs, a fascinating jumping Jack, and a rattle box that was warranted to bewilder and absorb the most perverted infantile imagination. On Mrs. Simpson's appearance with a precious pink and white bundle, Bolton eyed his treasures and took courage.

"I should have come yesterday, it was so sunshiny, but baby was teething, and I was afraid the darling would worry. You know how dreadful teething is? The precious pet is three months old, and it's perfectly marvelous how he can talk. Now mamma's cunnin' love, tell the gemplum oo name."

"Adle, adle, adle, adle."

"He says his name is Henry Wadsworth Long-

fellow Simpson. There, there, 'et mamma wife 'is moufh, sweetest moufh that ever lived! Now tell the gemplum where papa is."

"Adle, adle, adle."

"He says his papa's gone to Boston. Isn't that wonderful? Now when is papa coming back? There's a darlin'!"

"Adle, adle, adle goo—oooo."

"He says papa's comin' home to-night. Mamma's blessed! Do you know, I'm so afraid the child won't live that I often can't sleep from anxiety. Such bright children are so hard to raise. Now I think I'd better hold the treasure, don't you, Mr. Bolton? If it turns out well, I mean to have a crayon made for Mr. Simpson's Christmas. There, there, my precious lamb, don't oo cry, don't, don't. Look at the lovely man jumpin', jumpin' for the baby! There, there. Now isn't he the sweetest 'ittle thing! Do take it! Quick, Mr. Bolton! It's taken!"

[The prodigy is bundled off. Bolton sighs with relief and mentally consigns himself to celibacy.]

TERRA INCOGNITA

Terra Incognita.

[Mateel and Sister Aloyscius bend their reverent footsteps chapel-ward to deck a sainted Abbey father's tomb with flowers.]

MATEEL.

DEAR Sister Aloyscius, I have tried
To do but right. You know how I have plied
My needle on that 'broidered altar-cloth.
How can one chain one's thought?

SISTER ALOYSCIUS.

Poor moth! Alas!
Her tempting flame is the unknown. Dear heart,
What claims your thought? Confession will impart
Resisting power. Mary, Thou of Grace,
Oh aid me! Save her!

MATEEL.

Can I tell! You trace
The color in that flower? My very blood
Seems conscious of its beauty. See the flood
Of red it urges to my cheek. I feel
Its warmth there, while it could not even steal

Reflection in your eye. That bird stirs me
To wildest impulse with its song, but see—
You listen all unmoved. These things that lend
Me such delight you say would surely send
Me on to joy in evil should I give
My eye and ear to them. How can one live
And steel one's soul, as you have done, 'gainst sin?

SISTER ALOYSCIUS.

My child, your strife, our prayers, shall vict'ry win.
But you mistake. The flowers, I love. To me
They ever seem but tender things that He
Has shaped and colored, perfumed with His breath.
The birds! I hear their song. To me it saith
Praise Him, oh praise. To Him all praise. But youth,
Alas, must suffer ere it find the truth.
Castilian blood flows in your veins, and 'tis
Oft said that Satan can much quicker his
Vile fires induce to burn in them than in
A heart like mine. I claim much calmer kin.
Your battle is more hard. Be warned by one
Who suffered in the world,—Mateel, that shun!
Live only for the world to come. Rejoice
In no regret. O Mother, hear my voice!
Save her from expiation and—regret.

MATEEL.

Hush! Brother Leo's at the organ yet.
Oh sister, enter softly, lest he cease!
Does not his music fill one's heart with peace?

[Within beneath the dimly-lighted arch they pause and listen, while as if inspired he drifts from hymn to most enchanting strains, whispering of revel uncontrolled and dance.]

SISTER ALOYSCIUS.

Mateel! Why hearken with so rapt a face?
Oh most unhallowed in this holy place!
Mateel! Mateel! Your very soul should shrink
Come child, come quickly! Wake I say! Think!
think!

[They hasten forth. The sister breathes a prayer. Mateel, entranced, bewitched, seeks out her mates.]

MATEEL.

Alita! Come! and Marg'ret, you. Kate dear,
Bring Ann and Flo! Janette, come, come! Just
hear!
My breath is spent in heart beats. Oh, 'twill
burst
I think. Our brother Leo's playing still
The chapel organ. Oh, I listened till
Sweet Sister Aloyscius, horrified
At what enraptured me, in great haste hied

Me forth. It seemed his fingers were possessed
By some fantastic sprite that so expressed
Its transports of wild joy, perhaps not song
Or even music. Certain it did not belong
By nature to the music we have known.
'Twas like my dream of Spain—of heav'n. A tone,
The last my tense ear caught, vibrating yet
My every nerve, responsive-like, is set
A quiver. Words but hamper! I can't tell!
But look!—I'll try—indeed I'll show you well!

[Instinctively she sweeps into a dance of Spain—now swift, now slow, or frantic, then dream-like.]

Oh gloomy chapel and depressing chants!
No more! Life's joy's revealed—to sway—to dance!
Move quickly from my way, Alita dear!
Hush! Sister Aloyscius' step I hear!

DR. BEAN, DENTIST

Dr. Bean, Dentist.

NELL always makes irrevelant remarks, but she is funny, you know. I begged her to go with me to Dr. Bean's this morning. I had any number of teeth to be filled, and my teeth are so dreadfully sensitive. I knew she would talk and keep my mind off the pain. Well, she did. Dr. Bean ushered us into a room, a small room, so small it contained only one chair—that unshapely inevitable chair in which one can be elevated to an astonishing altitude, or lowered until one has an absolutely gone feeling. Then that swinging table in front of it, littered with all sorts of instruments of torture—oh, I loathe Dr. Bean's chair! *Entre nous*, I don't think Nell does. I am sure she positively coveted the cavities in my teeth when Dr. Bean put his arm about my head—just to steady it, you know. She's been poking her teeth ever since for flaws, but they're as sound as nuts. You see Nell isn't engaged, and Dr. Bean is so eligible. Then, too, she loves to make an impression. She didn't begin very well this morning, though. I

introduced her with much *empressement*, "Dr. Bean, this is my dearest friend, Miss Corn."

"How d'y'do, doctor! Isn't your chamber of horrors rather cramped?"

I was giggling disgracefully, and the doctor was quite discomforted over her reflection on the dimensions of his room. Dr. Bean is so diffident. Wouldn't you think he'd get over it? He has to be so familiar with every one, you know.

One thing I insisted on before I sat down and submitted—Nell must have a chair where I could see her, so Dr. Bean resignedly found one and located Nell.

Well, we had a time! Dr. Bean says he isn't usually interrupted so often. We happened upon the exceptional morning. If he said once, "Miss Bennett, let me have the chair please, just a moment," he said it twenty times. I do believe that every tooth-tormented mortal in town appeared, determined to share my particular morning. Oh, I wish Nell was here to tell you about—why, here she is! You dear! I was just longing for you to come. Do tell Aunt Curtis about our excruciating time at Dr. Bean's!

Sallie! Wasn't that an experience? Isn't he the most fascinating creature? You know, Aunt Curtis, men of his age, if they know anything at

all, are sure to think themselves perfect Solomons as to wisdom, but he— why he's as unassuming, and it's perfectly wonderful what he can do! Have you seen Sallie's teeth? Sallie, if you ever go to Dr. Bean's without me—well, I suppose I shall be wretched if I don't go, and miserable if I do, for I simply sit and watch and wreak with envy. Oh, Sallie, for such a quiet body what a rumpus he raises, and what a life he's led. Did you tell Aunt Curtis about that embodied tornado we encountered when we went in? No? We heard angry voices, Aunt Curtis, and there stood that darling doctor reasoning with a—a—regular Hibernian Amazon. Doesn't that just describe her, Sallie?

"Niver a cint—niver a cint of it will ye git! Do ye see thim tath? Ain't that a purty sight? Gould, Docthur Bane, gould, ivery blissed wan o' thim. Sure an' it's four dintists was afthur fillin' o' thim, an' niver a cint did they git. Are ye ony more desarvin' than the loikes o' thim? Indade ye're not. Faith I'm afthur thinkin' ye dintists makes yere money too aisy. I'm a cook, Docthur Bane, a cook, an' it's mony a year I've bin makin' swate things an' spilin' tath for the loikes o' ye to mind. It's beholdin' to Bedelia Sheehan ye are. Faith ye moight be considtherin' that."

Aunt Curtis, you should have seen how that darling kept his dignity!

"But, Madam, the bill is reasonable."

"Rasonable, is it? Rasonable! Twinty dollars, an' the savin's o' twinty wakes it 'ud take to pay it. Tell me this, Docthur Bane, would ye pay yere cook the same for the same dale o' work? Indade, ye would not. An' it's niver a cint I'll pay to any one betthur off than meself, an' mony a one I'll hope ye'll mate o' the same moind, thin someday, mark my spach, ye'll see Bedelia Sheehan an' all her frinds a ridin' about in their own coups."

Did you ever hear anything so dreadfully audacious, Aunt Curtis?—and, Sallie, wasn't he simply heroic not to summon a policeman and have her arrested on the spot?

Well, I must tell you! Sallie was no sooner seated and resigned to misery—she says it's misery, but I can't imagine how it can be, oh dear!—than that simpering Belle Stanton appeared. Wasn't she a picture of distress? She'd been suffering for her sins through some grumpy tooth all the week. I'm sure she hasn't an atom of conscience, Aunt Curtis. Isn't that a dispensation of Providence?

"Don't you think I'd better take gas or something, doctor? I can't stand pain, you know.

Oh-o-o-oh! Gas is perfectly safe, isn't it? My heart all right? Why, what do you mean, doctor? Oh yes, of course. No, I don't think the *gas* will affect it. Tell me, is one liable to say anything one ought not to say? I'm sure I've heard of people doing most ridiculous things. Oh-o-o-oh! Do you suppose I would? Oh, isn't it true? That is a relief. Oh-o-o-oh! It doesn't take long, does it? You're sure I won't feel it? Hold my head tightly, won't you, doctor? What shall I do? Inhale deeply? Oh-o-o-oh!"

Didn't she make a fuss, Sallie? When she came to the first thing she said was:

"What did I do, doctor? Did I say anything? What did I say?"

That kind thing assured her that she was as quiet as a mouse (isn't he considerate, Sallie?), but Sallie and I took fiendish delight in exchanging glances just to make her uncomfortable. She's so inane, Aunt Curtis.

"Oh, it was a terrible sensation, doctor. Will it come on again now, do you think? Hadn't I better take a cab home?"

Finally she went, but she looked very uneasily at Sallie and me.

Hadn't you been in the chair about half an hour when that old woman from the country ven-

tured in? Wasn't she just too quaint? This was the burden of her discourse, Aunt Curtis:

"Not intrudin', am I? S'pose you're the dentist. Yes? Now it's strange I knew it, but you look it, somehow. Hiram said he didn't see why I shouldn't have my teeth out and git a new set. He's got such high filutin' notions, Hiram has. He thinks there's nothin' like keepin' up to the times. He says to me, 'Keep as young as you can, 'Mandy, and a good set of teeth goes a long way toward makin' a woman look handsome.' Well, I have been screwin' up my courage for weeks, and here I am. Now if I can have them out without knowin' anything about it, I shall feel relieved. Hadn't I better take ether? Gas? You don't say? Never heard of takin' gas. And it's just as good? Well, well! I s'pose I'm likely as not to come out of it alright, ain't I? I've hern tell of them effects, and I sez to Hiram, 'You may be a widower afore night,' and I wanted to make my will (there's some quilts and things that I made with my own hands, and I don't much relish the idea of a second wife's havin' 'em), but Hiram said there was no use courtin' misfortune by makin' preparations, so I concluded to run the risk. I tell you, though, it's a purty serious step, ain't it? It'll be over afore I know it, eh? Well, I'm glad of that."

The doctor has an assistant, of course, but he was out, so that patient dear asked us if we would mind helping him a little. The old lady was very excited under the influence of the gas, so Sallie held her head and I tried to keep possession of her hands. We didn't succeed very startlingly. Every now and then she would wrench her hands from my grasp, beat her knees and sing, "Shall we gather at the River? What are you doin' to me? Shall we gather at the River? What are you doin' to me?"

Wasn't it an ordeal, Sallie? Wasn't it a study to watch for signs of returning consciousness? She looked pretty blank for a minute, then she exclaimed:

"Well, I've come to! I wonder if Hiram'll be disappointed, why—why—haven't you pulled out my teeth? Well, I never! What—why—oh—Doctor, I felt every bit of that pain! Now what's the use of takin' gas, I'd like to know? Well, I'm glad it's over. Wonder if I'll be able to git home? You don't mean to say I can't have my new teeth right away? Well, that's a purty how'y'do! How'm I goin' to eat or talk? My! I shan't dare to smile. Hiram will have a laugh at me. Eh? Got to wait for my gums to shrink? Dear land sus! I don't know how much more

room you want. My mouth feels 'bout as big as our barn now. How much do I owe you, doctor? Five dollars? You don't say? Well, I brought some butter and cheese and five dozen eggs along that I thought 'u'd come to about what you'd charge. They're all as fresh as can be. Do make them teeth as quick as you can, doctor. I must say I'm much obliged."

Aunt Curtis, just imagine that dear, an unmarried man, you know, being paid in butter and cheese and eggs. Isn't he the very personification of good nature?

He had been working that (Sallie says unbearable) treddle machine and whirling a wicked looking tool in her mouth for quite a time, when we were suddenly startled out of our equanimity by a wail of agony from the outer room.

"Oh—oh—oooo! I say, ma, it don't ache! It dont ache! Let me go home! Oh—oooo!"

Who do you suppose it was, Aunt Curtis? Madge Wilson and her irrepressible eldest. You know she was the first one of our set to marry. She ran away from school to do it of course, but she always seems to think it was an achievement and affects such an assumption of sorrow over our single state. One thing—she hasn't the slightest idea how to manage children.

"Boo—hoo—hoooo—it'll hurt—oh—oooh—I can't ma—boo—hoo—hoo! Let me go home! Oh—oooh!"

If she'd just given him a good shaking, Sallie.

"Mamma's blessed boy—there—there. Come, precious. It won't hurt. The doctor won't hurt darling. Mamma won't let him. Come sit in the chair and let the doctor see that naughty old tooth."

"Oh—oo—oh—where's he taking me, ma? Don't go, ma! Boo—hoo—oh—oooh! What's that for?

"That's just an instrument, Freddie darling. Open your mouth wide like a good boy."

"Boo—hoo! What for?"

"Just to let the doctor see that bad, bad tooth. Come—there's a dear, brave boy."

"Oh—oooh—I don't want to. What's that for?"

"That's an instrument, precious. Come, open your mouth wide."

"What's an instrument? Boo—hoohoo!"

"Come, mamma's little hero, open your mouth wide, then we'll go and get some nice sweet candy. Frederic, open your mouth this minute! Shall mamma have to punish?"

"Boo—hoo—hoo—boo—hoo—hoo! Oh—oooooh!"

"There, there! My treasure! Don't cry. Open your mouth and mamma will get a lovely bicycle for her pet, as soon as he gets a big boy."

"Boo—hoo—ooo—what for?"

"Why, darling, a splendid bicycle like Tommy's. Come, think of that. Let mamma look at the wicked tooth that hurts her dearest. Look, doctor!"

"Oh—oh—oh—oooh! Boo—hoo—hoo! I'm killed! I'm killed! Oh—ooooh! I want to go home!"

Aunt Curtis, you know I don't believe in Theosophy, but if ever I have a son, I hope he'll prove a re-embodiment of Stonewall Jackson. I must go now—yes, I must. Good-bye, Aunt Curtis. Sallie, look at my teeth! Can't you see a single cavity?

BETWEEN THE ACTS

Between the Acts.

PUT one of these roses in my hair, Nuggins. Just the right bit of color, isn't it? There—is the effect pretty? Some way I feel more than usually anxious to do well to-night. How's my make-up? Too red, eh? This cheek? That's easily fixed. Is my nose too white? Give me that blender, please. There, is that better? Oh dear! I feel unaccountably nervous.

La—a—a—la—ah—

It shows so in my voice, doesn't it? I must try to sing it out. I'll wear the white gloves, Nuggins. There was a button off. Did you sew it on?

Tra—la—la—la—la, tra—la—ah, tra—la—ah—

Oh my love,
See the drowsy Apollo
As he laves in a cloud of wine,
And shadows stalk in the hollow
While his purple sweeps the hill;
But the night has given a promise
To-morrow will fulfill.

Sweet song, isn't it, Nuggins? Can't you find the gloves? Where did you put them? Nuggins, come here. I've a secret to tell you. I'm—I'm

going to be married to-morrow! There—there, you dear thing, don't make such a noise over it. Some one will hear you. You're not to breathe it, remember! Just loosen the tie of that shoe a little. No, you mustn't tell anyone. Oh you crazy Nuggins, you're unlacing it entirely. You knew that roses waiting for me every night this season meant something serious, now didn't you? Of course, you did! Tra—la—la—

Oh my love,
Oh my dear one come with me
To a garden fancy-formed,
Where hope grows hid in a rose-tree
With tender buds all ablush,
And a bird nestles nigh while her mate sings,
To-morrow, to-morrow! Hush, hush!

Oh my love,
Oh my dear one my heart sings
To-morrow, to-morrow! Hush, hush!
Oh Sun-god fly hither on swift wings!
Oh rose-tree bloom fair as a bride!
Oh bird proudly chirp to thy nestlings!
Oh to-morrow bring thee to my side!

Nuggins! Nuggins! Nuggins! Where were you? Just draw up this bodice a little, will you? Those wrinkles were making my hair turn gray. There—now you may go—no, Nuggins! Nuggins! Are you flirting with the gas-man, or what is the

matter with you? You're neglecting me lately. I have to call and call for you. Oh well, never mind. I don't mean to be cross. Where is my lip-rouge? Don't you tell the gas-man my secret! There's a chance for a bad pun, Nuggins. Did you peep through the curtain? Was that exasperating fringed pate that nightly shines before my eyes in his customary seat?

> Oh his head was bald and gleaming,
> But he loved with all true seeming,
> He loved her singing sweet,
> He loved her dancing feet,
> Her dainty and delightful dancing feet!

Stop your laughing, Nuggins! My voice sounds better, doesn't it? I'm glad I'm not on in the first act. Now I think I can spare you.

Oh—isn't it glorious to be alive! Everything is tinted with the color of these roses to-night. Now I must find his message. It's always somewhere in the heart of the bouquet, right by the center rose. Last night it was so dear. Just—"I love you! I love you!" How I sang afterwards! I think I could find it if I were blind. I'll try with my eyes closed. Now where—where is it? Oh! what a sharp thorn! There is no message! Oh—oh—I'm sorry. I miss it. And to-night—the last before— Perhaps it dropped

out into the box. Nuggins! Nuggins! Where can she be? Oh, is that you, Mr. Turnetti? Have you sung your solo? No? The act is on, isn't it? Did the duet get an encore? Flatted all through the cadenza—she did? If you see my maid, will you please tell her I'm calling her? Oh, there you are, Nuggins. Did he propose? Where is the box that my roses came in? Oh yes,—you didn't see a note when you took them out, did you? Were there any letters? What two? Where are they? On my table? Why didn't you tell me? You can go again now if you like.

Yes—his writing! He has sent a letter instead of the rose-message. Who can this be from? I must see—

"*Danceuse* fair!"

Ha, ha, ha! *Danceuse!*

"*Danceuse* fair! Sweet spirit of song,
At whose altar I've worshipped long,
Bend thy loved glances,
Though sharp their lances,
On this poor slave who worships afar!"

Oh yes, I know—second row from the front, orchestra—ugh! Now my letter—my precious letter! How happy I am! How happy—

"Dear One:

This is to say good-bye and—forgive me. I am

giving you up for them—for my father and mother."

Oh——oh——

"Their hopes are centered in me, and they represent my duty. I've realized it, though at this moment I hate them as I love you. To-day I told them our story as I promised you I would. I hoped they would open their hearts to you, but—I can not tell you! It was terrible! My father convinced me that our union would certainly kill my mother, and estrange him from me forever. You know what that means. Good-bye, dear one, and forget me. I shall never forget you, though this good-bye thrusts eternity between us!"

Oh—oh—cruel! Good-bye! Oh—I feel so ill—so ill. I must not—I must not think of it! I must not think of it! I have to sing—to sing. No one must know! How could he wri—write—that? If he loved me, how could he? How could he? Oh, he didn't write it, he didn't, he didn't! I can't believe it! What? Yes—yes—who is it? Oh—is tha—that you, Jack? Am I "decent"? Why yes, yes, of course. Come in! My! what a break-down! You are getting on. You'll be turning out a specialty artist next. Is the curtain—the curtain down? What? Oh no—no—no—nothing is the matter. I'm out of sorts to-night. Tell me about yourself. They like you, don't they? I knew they would. I was sure the work would be play

for you. What? No—don't say that, Jack. Good of me to take notice of you when I'm great and you're nobody? Why Jack, I'm not great and you're not nobody. I don't forget the time when we starved in opposite attics, when my father neglected me, and your mother beat you. We shared crusts then, Jack. Why Jack, the long ago would have been all shadow and sorrow if it hadn't been for you. Thinking of it is like looking into a chamber of memory where all is dark, dark save for one friendly light. You hold that light, Jack, and it will never go out. There! Arn't you ashamed of yourself—you are making a comic opera singer cry. Ha, ha, ha! Oh Jack, I'm so blue to-night. I feel as if I couldn't sing a note. Oh, how can I—how can I?

Eh? What was that? Oh, is that you, Miss Costello? Heigho! How's your b flat? Here's mine—ah! Off the key, am I? What does she know about keys? Well, if I can't sing, I can act, can't I, Jack? Jack, I think I'll leave the opera for the drama. Wouldn't you? Ha,ha,ha, ha! Wait a moment, and I'll do a scene for you! You stand there for the audience, Jack. Now suppose—suppose that I'm a struggling singer, that I've no friends, and I don't know the meaning of home, but I've a voice and I win my way.

Then suppose—suppose, Jack, that I'm—loved, and—respected, and the world is transformed for —I love. Then, oh then suppose that he tells me to forget him, that I know I must forget him! How can I live—how can I live—how can I live! Where is his letter? Yes—yes—see—he gives me up for them, for his father and mother! Duty! No—no—he loved me less than them. Oh I hate him and them! I hate them! I hate them! Oh—ah—Ja—Jack—Jack! Why—why do you look at me like that? Didn't I tell you I could act? Ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh go now, Jack, go! I'm so hysterical. I must pull myself together or I won't be able to sing. See—I've ruined my make-up! Go, Jack, go! Come again—again, Jack!

Oh what must he think—what must he think? What did I say—what did I say? He looked so frightened. I must act myself—as I did when—when I was happy. My eyes are all blurred. They will be noticed! My hand trembles so—how can I fix them? That rose! Oh—I—can't wear it! Where is that letter? I must put it away. It might be seen. Where can Nuggins be? Oh I can't sing—I can't, I can't! She must tell them I am ill. Oh—my heart is breaking, breaking!

[She throws herself forward on the table, in desperate grief. There is a faint cry of fire, but she sobs on unheeding. The cries grow louder, mingled with the sounds of burning timber. Still she is unconscious of them.]

He said his mother would die. I shall die! Is that nothing to him? Oh he was right—right, but how can I bear it!

What was that? What—fire? They are crying fire! Nuggins! Nuggins! Why, there is smoke in the room! Nuggins! Oh what is the matter with the door—ugh! The smoke is stifling! Great God! The hall is in flames! They have forgotten me! I can not pass through it—but I must! No—no—impossible! What shall I do! What shall I do! Nuggins! Jack! Jack! Ah—ah—it scorches me! I must close the door again. I can't—I can't! Help—oh help me! I must keep my wits about me. That window—yes, I can reach it. How does it open—how does it open? Oh—how could they forget me? I can't open it—I can't—I can't! Yes, it's starting—oh—thank God! Oh the smoke—the smoke—I can see nothing! It is black—black as death! Help—help! Oh help! No one hears me. I—I must—jump! There is nothing else. My roses—I wish I had them. The flames have touched them already. I must—jump. God help me!

THE MATRIMONIAL MANŒUVERS OF MAJOR MUSKET

The Matrimonial Manœuvers of Major Musket.

HE lost a rebel right eye, right arm and left leg during our late war. Besides being so abbreviated physically he had no kin that he could discover, and the purpose of his buffeted existence proved a baffling problem to him, until one astonished day when he fell heir to the attenuated property of a remote relative in New England. He did not pause to dissect good fortune, but moved north-east at once. There he lived, cared for by an Argus-eyed housekeeper until social starvation drove him to desperation. Hungry and thirsty for companionship he finally resorted to the daring expedient of advertising for a wife.

* * * * *

A Tuesday morning is well under way. The Major has breakfasted dutifully but absentmindedly. He is obviously a changed man. The places of his departed members have been filled with all the grace within the possibility of wood. A would-be eye shines beautifully, if somewhat glassily. What more could be desired? The

morning paper proved absorbing. He has scanned it with the zest of a contributor.

"Here it is, here it is. Ha, ha, ha, ha! Not a bit bad, Major. Not a bad bit o' bait. Ha, ha! Not bad for a remnant who has only one leg to kick at adversity, one eye to read the future and one arm to embrace happiness. Ha, ha, ha! Not bad, not bad!

WANTED.—A wife. Wanter, a Southern officer of snug fortune. Wantee, must be womanly and companionable. Please call Tuesday morning between ten and twelve at No. 20 Muster Square.

"Cæsar! It's ten o'clock now, or I miss aim. Hie there, McCarroty, what time it is?"

"Moi goodness, Major, what a voice ye have. It's jist afthur strikin' tin."

"Sure 'nough, sure 'nough. McCarroty, ahem-ahem! I'm—ah—I'm—ah—expecting a visitor, several visitors, a regiment of them in fact."

"Yis sir, ye don't say."

"And McCarroty, I propose to but one at a time,—ah-ahem—that is to say—you show them to the ah—to the library, and I'll see them in turn."

"Yis sir. (A rigimint o' visitors comin' is it, an' I'll swear by me savin's he don't know a sowl in the city.)"

"What's this, Major, what's this? No white feather, Major. You're on the field. Your heart is up in full uniform ready for conquest. What does it matter if you do feel like a restored ruin? Who could detect it, now I say, who could detect it? Eh? There goes the bell! McCarroty, not at home! not at home, I say! McCarroty, not at home! Hush — no? False alarm. Courage, Major, courage! See! the lady enters, and you bow low—bow low— there — now. The smoke clears, and you fire your first volley.

"Madame, you had but to come to conquer. "Great guns! McCarroty, what are you after now?"

"If ye plase, I'm afthur usherin' in the top wan o' yere rigimint, an' thim was yere orders I'm thinkin'! What a pair o' lungs ye have, to be sure! Here's a lady that be askin' to see ye. Yere name agin, if ye plase, mum?"

"Houghtaling."

"Hough*tal*ing, Major Musket."

"That will do, McCarroty. Miss—ah—*Miss* Houghtaling?"

"*Mrs.* Houghtaling, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Major Musket, Mrs. Houghtaling. You—ah —you—ahem! you read the papers I see, Mrs. Houghtaling."

"Yes, it's a lonely life I'd lead if it wasn't for the papers. Mr. Houghtaling always read the papers, and I couldn't do better than walk in his footsteps."

"Of course, of course. May I inquire if his footsteps have ceased to fall, madame?"

"Yes sir, they have, sir! Did you take me for a divorced woman, a divorced woman, sir?"

"No, no, madame, certainly not, certainly not."

"Yes, he's no more, no more. And the unselfishness of that man, Major Musket! Why, life's worth living just to know it. With his last breath he told me to marry again if I could find anyone to have me, and not to think he would be uneasy with someone else in his boots. 'Twas enough to know they wouldn't fit (he wore tens, sir); and speaking of boots reminds me, he gave and bequeathed his new winter overcoat to his successor, whoever he might be. I have it put away in camphor with some other things you can perhaps make use of. He was so generous, always thinking of others, I felt all along that he was too good to live. His dying request was that his picture, a large crayon, sir, should always be left hanging beside mine over the parlor mantel, and I do believe that at the resurrection day he'll think his claim ought to come first, and I am

satisfied in the conviction that if my second husband attempts to carry a high hand with me, Leander Houghtaling's spectre will appear to him and raise a finger of warning. There! I felt it was my duty to tell you all, and now I think we understand each other, don't we, my dear—Major?"

"Oh, yes, madame, I've no doubt of it, none in the world. I don't wish to seem ungallant, but the fact is, I've a rooted antipathy to widows. This doesn't refer to you in particular, Mrs. Houghtaling, but to all widows in general. I don't stand in immediate need of your husband's legacy, and overcoat and boots. You see I wish my portrait to hang over the parlor mantel, in short, madame, I want first claim at the resurrection day!"

"Oh, no doubt you're very right, sir. I've humiliated myself to a very inappreciative person I see, sir. Ah—many a day will pass before I meet another Leander Houghtaling!"

"Good-morning, Mrs. Houghtaling!"

"Good-day, *Mr.* Musket!"

"Overcoat, boots, and a ghost! Well, I think not. This is more than I bargained for."

"Miss Millie Muffin, Major Musket."

"How do you do? Yes, Millie Muffin is my name—Millena, you know. This is so embarrass-

ing. I hardly realized or I think I shouldn't have had the courage—"

"Nothing to be afraid of, miss."

"Oh, no, I'm sure of that. You see I read your advertisement, and my soul, unconsciously craving for its companion, instantly recognized our affinity of spirit. Yes, I felt it at once so powerfully that I seemed to see you and I, in a vision, floating through space, and I composed a poem directly on the subject. It was something like this,—

I soar, I soar, but not alone.
Another's spirit all unknown
Glides close beside.
To be his bride
On terra firma some day soon,
I sink, I sink to seek that boon.

I saw, I saw his soldier eye
Gleam like a hero's brave to die
Besieged, my heart
Will burst apart.
Alas! an arrow stingeth there.
I sleep, I sleep to drown despair.

I wake, I wake. What's this, what's this?
It is, it is my Bayard's kiss!
United we
Now soon will be.
Cherubic Cupids circling stay
To chant upon our wedding day.

"You see I am a devoted disciple of the new school of poetry. Yes, I'm a symbolist. I know you would enjoy reading my last story, 'Woman versus Cupid.' It is so sad and my soul whispers that you are sympathy personified. When we are—one, you, and you alone, shall read my manuscripts. I've really never thought about—marrying before. You see, I've been ever wedded to poetry."

"I'm sorry to–ah–to–disappoint you, miss, but, ah–but I object to literary people. Yes, that is to say, I object to them."

"What do I hear? Object? Oh no, it's incredible! This is but another dream. Have I mistaken this Philistine for the mate of my soul? What shall I do? The situation is so compromising. You won't consider me your betrothed, will you? Oh, release me, sir! I throw the ring I might have worn at your feet. A man with no poetry in his soul!—I would rather marry a Pagan!"

"You are free to marry an anthropophagus, if you like, miss. Good-morning!

"Thunder and Mars! What next? I'm on a matrimonial pedestal but it's crumbling beneath me. A prop, or I shall fall back into bachelordom and—stay there forever. Who now? How

d'y'do, sir? What can I do for you? I'm rather busy this—"

"Oh yes, I seed you was purty busy, but I thought I'd better say what I had t' say afore that 'ere galaxy uv beauty outside started in. You had a paragraph in this mornin's paper that took my eye. Yes, it did. I said, I'll go in town and interview that chap. He seems a likely sort. You see, 'bout a year ago I married a widow. (Take my advice, young man, don't marry a widow. When they're maids, they're sweet and sour. Well, the first feller is liable to get all the sweet, and you get all the sour.) I've had to father the first fellar's children, and I've got a step-darter that 'u'd jest take your eye. Purty perticular? That's right, so'm I. There's been one or two hangin' round of late, an' that green-horn o' farmer Barker's is sort o' shinin' up to her, but I'm purty sartin I'd have 'em both to support ef she married him, so I don't favor the match. Now ef you'n me kin come to terms, you kin start in sparkin' as soon as you like. Ma'n me 'll shut one eye 'n keep t'other open to help you on. Perhaps ye're one uv the bashful sort, eh? That's a great affliction. Worse to git over than stutterin'. Proposin' 's purty ticklish business. Now may be I can give you some val-

erable points 'bout poppin' the question. There's no use uv goin' down on your knees an' pleadin'. That sets a girl too high up in her own opinion, 'n, ten to one she'll jest the same as keep you there all the rest uv yer life. 'Nother thing, I don't b'lieve in philanderin' 'round fer a year or more, till the old man corners you, 'n wants to know what yer intentions are. Now in the case uv ma 'n me, I jest kept a cool head, 'n came straight to the point, 'n she—why, gosh darn it—she couldn't said yes quicker ef I'd been a match 'n she a fire-cracker. Sez I, 'Sally, ye're the woman fer me 'n I won't have no other.' Sez she, 'Si, ye're the man fer me, 'n I don't want no other.' But you don't seem perticularly pleased over my propersition. Well, I won't hurry you. You jest think it over 'n let me know. Si.Kinney, Esquire, Skokorat, 'll reach me. There's somebody else clamorin' to git in so I guess I'll git out. Good-mornin', sir."

"Ah, zis is ze gentleman. Oh, monsieur, how can I give you ze tanks. You have spoken to zis heart. She is—what you call him—wide awake. A soldier of you South? Ah grand, magnificent! Ah, monsieur, you have lost ze arm. Eh bien, mine shall be yours. I will too be monsieur's crutch. No? Ah oui, oui, monsieur. Let me

show you. Zis arm on my shouldar. Now! Can we not travel avec happiness? No? No? Ah, monsieur. I see you are cruel. You are ze coquette! Ah mon cœur! what will you know of torture. Zis man has brought you to his house to make a jolly good—good-ha-ha-ha-of your love."

"Madame! Mademoiselle—"

"Oui—oui! Vous avez raison! Mademoiselle. I was made in ze heaven pour vous. I live—I do not love. I read ze paper—I love. I see monsieur —ah, mon dieu! I see us très happy with that—what you say—fortune snug. If ze fortune is not enough snug, we will somethings. Oui, we wilt make ze bonnets, très joli, for ze ladies. Ah zal window shall be charmante. And monsieur,—he shall teach to use ze sword as he did in ze grand battle. Ah, shall we not be in ze bliss!"

"Wee, wee, mademoiselle! I'm not well to-day. I'm out of—of sorts. I'm in no condition to talk, comprenez? Excusez moi, si'l vous plaît —I'm—I'm—j'ai mal!"

"No—no—monsieur! That is not so? I should be by monsieur's side to feed ze gruel et ze pills. No? You refuse?"

"Wee, wee! Allez! allez vous!"

"Ah, monster! You have broken zis heart!

You have broken zis heart. Adieu, adieu! Oh monster, you are a brute!"

"For de lor' sake! I nebber seed so many young wimmin afore in all my life. You jes lemme pass girl! What's the mattah wid yo' anyhow? Good mawnin', massa. Wait a minute, massa! Yo' see, massa, I was readin' de paper dis mawnin'! an' my eye lit on yo'r advertisement, an' I obsarved—What's dis yere? What's dis yere? Yere's a poor man in dis civilized locality, livin' by hisself,cookin' his own food,washin' his own dishes, sweepin' de floors, an' mendin' his own clothes. Lor' knows, maybe he's as ragged as a tramp, an' all dis for de need ob a wife. I tell you' massa, my heart jes ris right up in my throat. I thought about de ole place down South an' I was dat homesick I jes couldn't eat my breakfas'. I've been tastin' corn-bread an' possum eber since. Now I reckoned yo' was a gentlemen ob color, massa, an' seein' as how I was Mrs. Crumption an' a preacher's widow, I thought maybe yo'd take a shine to me, an' I been picturin' us goin' han' in han' through de res ob our natural libes. Yo' don't need to speak massa! I see by yo'r countenance dat dis yere darkey's dream's dispelled foreber. But don't you fo'git, massa, if dat yere red-headed creature dat tinks she owns

yo' wid a picket fence roun' yo', eber gibs yo' cause fo' tribulation, yo' jes' sen' mighty quick fo' Pearlie Lafayette Crumption."

The Major saw Pearlie Lafayette Crumpton depart and sat down in an agony of conflicting emotions, relief at what he had survived, trepidation at what he had still to undergo.

"The rare o' yere rigimint is layin' in wait for ye, Major."

"Put 'em out, McCarroty! Turn the guns on 'em! Don't let me even see their colors, McCarroty!"

"Their colors, their colors, is it? Ha, ha, ha! They're white, the rist o' thim, on me honor, Major. Can't I trate you to jist a peep at thim?"

"Put 'em out! Put 'em out, McCarroty! What am I? Fool, dolt, idiot! What was I? A good soldier in comfortable ambuscade. What do I do? Build a big bonfire, and betray myself to the enemy of man. Well—well—McCarroty! Don't tell me thy're too much for you."

"Oi've routed the rare, Major, but I must say, sir, ye expect a good dale of wan wake Irish woman."

"Unarmed at that, weren't you, McCarroty? So was I. You deserve a pension, McCarroty!"

"Major, a word wid ye, if ye plase. Oi've suspicioned ye!"

"What, McCarroty?"

"Oi've suspicioned ye! Ye obtained me and me sarvices under pretinces."

"What McCarroty, you're not going to desert—not desert, McCarroty?"

"What do ye desarve, Major Musket? What was there about ye to tell a confidin' woman loike meself that ye were a marryin' man? It reflects on me past sarvices, sir, for ye to be wantin' to marry. I object to sarvin a marryin' man!"

"McCarroty, I'm a marrying man no longer!"

AN AMERICAN GIRL AT AN ENGLISH DINNER PARTY

An American Girl at an English Dinner Party.

AT Mrs. Bertie Partington-Parker's dinner I was a nonentity, but it is the privilege of even an atom to circulate, and that I did gleaning enjoyment. Bel Street, my American cousin, was the guest of honor and sat scintillating at the right of our host. Now I'm English, but I've crossed so often that I'm perfectly familiar with the geography, customs and languages of the United States. It was Bel's first visit to London, and her first dinner out there, consequently she was wide-eyed with an extensive expectation.

A be-monicled, indigestible young man took me out and sat between Bel and me. Bel's *vis-à-vis* was a tall, thin young lady who dined in her gloves, and I observed Bel mentally wonder if it was the correct thing. When the thin young lady first spoke we were alarmed. She ran an interrogative crescendo up to about high C where she gave a tiny shriek, then an expostulating diminuendo down to a struggling gutteral some-

where about G flat, and she continued these vocal gymnastics throughout the dinner.

A vase filled with purplish orchids partially hid from me an old lady and gentleman. I could see, though, that they were so intent on eating that they never spoke from soup to cheese. She wore a cap remarkable for its utter lack of contour, several necklaces that half revealed and half concealed her wrinkles, and all the family heirlooms on exhibition across her corsage.

Then there was a man named Barthold, who wrote. He admired George Moore and couldn't see any reason for Meredith's existence. He was convinced that the moral screw of the universe was irreparably loose and Moore could prove it.

There were a few others, notably one, a musician, whose future as a heavenly harpist is certainly assured.

The first course was evidently pre-arranged to place Bel perfectly at home.

Our host explained,

"These little-neck clams arrived yesterday on the *Teutonic* for a temporary sojourn in London. Hope the voyage hasn't interfered with their power to please the palate."

"Clams! Little-neck clams! Really! What curious creatures, to be sure. They are creatures,

arn't they? Now, do you know, I'm just a wee bit afraid of them?" vocalized the lady in gloves.

"Creatures!" (the clams survived creditably a monicled scrutiny). "By Jove, to be sure! Oh I say, clever idea of yours, old fellow. Do your marketing in America, eh? Send a cable every morning, I dare say. Awfully interesting, this. Quite an experience, don't you know."

"Oh, Miss Street," piped her *vis-à-vis*, "do tell me,—I'm sure I've heard that you have in America a remarkable dish made of clams. Now what is it called? Ctch—tch—chowder? Yes, I believe it's chowder. Do tell me how it's made."

"Chowder? Oh yes, chowder is one of our delectables. Made? Oh I'm sure I can't say,—a little of this, a little of that, in fact, a little of everything."

"Really, I'm afraid I shouldn't approach it with much confidence." By this time the gloves were animated with sherry and gesticulated stiffly. "Oh, Miss Street, I met a countryman of yours yesterday, a Mr. Starter. I've no doubt you know him."

"Mr. Starter? No, I think not. Where was he from?"

"Now where was he from? Mamma, where was Mr. Starter from? Oh yes, Tch–Tch–Tchi-

cago, I think it was. You have a Tchicago?"

"Chicago? Yes, we have a Chicago, a small place about a thousand miles from where I live."

"Oh—oh— you Americans! You are so funny. Just hear her speak of such a tremendous distance with positively flippant unconcern! I can never comprehend you Americans!"

"You are neglecting your wine, Miss Street," interrupted our host.

"I'm not self-possessed enough to do it justice," regretted Bel.

"Oh I say," ventured Mr. Monicle, in a protesting undertone, "this is a burning shame. I'm famishing. Course after course of be-truffled poisons. Suicidal to touch them. If something plain and unvarnished doesn't come soon, I shall have to dine again when I get to my chambers. You haven't any, have you, Miss Street?"

"What haven't I?"

"Digestion."

"Oh yes, I have. You haven't."

"Oh—ah—of course. Perhaps you're right. Very good that. It's my liver. It inherited a nasty disposition from two generations of torpid ancestors. India, you know."

"India? Dreadful place!" sang the spare young lady. "Don't mention India, Ruinous

climate! What sort of climate have you in America, Miss Street?"

"Indeed, you can find any sort of climate with us. Now in Florida, it is almost tropical."

"Oh yes, of course. I didn't refer to Florida. I mean to say just the United States."

"Oh—ahem—well California—"

"Oh dear no, not California—the United States."

The monicle was adjusted.

"Oh I say, Miss Street, the lady opposite can't get beyond the thirteen original colonies. Deuced shame. Stupid party."

"Are you anti-salt, Miss Street?" inquired our host.

"No, but I've an uncle, an old philosopher, who is. He thinks that the entire human race is too salty, and he won't allow its use at his table."

"What an extremist! Take salt from me, and I should deteriorate physically to the consistency of a jelly fish and morally to the standard of a Fiji. No spices either, I suppose. Now, what would Barthold over there do without spice? I say, old fellow, it took years of intimate intercourse with pepper to evolve that article of yours in this week's *Illustrated.*"

"Mr. Barthold writes," volunteered Mr. Monicle to Bel and me.

"What are the principal English magazines?" inquired Bel.

"Such a lot of them, don't you know. Let me see—why yes, of course,—the *Century*."

"Pardon me," objected Bel, "that is American."

"You don't say! Is it now? Oh, to be sure! Well—*Harper's*."

"No, no, *Harper's* is American."

"Ah yes. One gets these rubbishy things confounded. Now you surely wont say the *Pall Mall* is American, will you?"

"No, but its editor is, *will he nil he*," laughed Bel.

"Do you write, Miss Street?" asked Mr. Partington-Parker.

"Nothing that pretends to anything. Letter-writing is my limit."

"What is your forte, Miss Street? (Solo allegro from the lady opposite.) You Americans are so clever. You all do something. I'm positive you sing. I sing, you know. My voice is in bad form, but you shall hear my new song, one of Tosti's own. He taught it me, of course. Mrs. Partington-Parker always insists on my singing. She is so irresistible, you know."

"Everybody sings here. The question of capability isn't considered for a suffering second. Awful state of things, don't you know," complained Mr. Monicle. "I hope you don't sing, Miss Street."

"Miss Street recites charmingly," said I.

"Really,—ah—indeed. Charmed to hear you, Miss Street, I'm sure."

Half an hour later, when the men, smoke-satiated, sauntered to the drawing-room, we heard Tosti's fledgling voice his song. She refused to commence before, needing the sustaining interest of the masculine element. She shyed each telling note at Mr. Monicle, who, being of sensitive fiber musically, writhed in a corner.

Then Bel recited something brief and fetching, after which Mr. Barthold approached her, seemingly steered by sheer surprise.

"Charming, Miss Street! When I heard you were going to recite I tried to escape, gracefully of course, but I suddenly found myself laughing uproarously, and in a moment you had finished. Our elocutionists invariably bore one for at least twenty minutes, and they always recite something about nailing the flag to the mast, don't you know."

I thought we had better depart while Bel was

on the top wave of popularity, so after the usual lingering, wordy ceremonies, we were soon snug in a hansom, and I called up to the "cabby," "The Langham please."

A YOUNG MAID AND—AN OLD MAID

A Young Maid and—An Old Maid.

June 6, 1874.

THE fact is, I'm afraid to open this letter. He wasn't a bit interesting last evening. He was so serious and—well, personal. I hoped I wouldn't see or hear from him again until he had indulged himself in another frame of mind. It appears that he went home and put all the seriousness he had left over into a letter, and here's the letter. When he's hopeful he runs my name uphill until there's no room for the stamp. When he's jealous he's angular, and Jenny looks like Jemimy, and he crosses the "t" with a splutter. Then when he's hopeless he runs down hill, and Miss Jenny Tuttle Trumbell looks as if she would lose her balance and tumble into 50 Temple Street. But now all the loops are big and round and solemn, and he writes straight ahead as if he were dead in earnest.

Well, I suppose I must read it. Gracious! what tough paper. There! Now what does he say?

DEAR JENNIE:—You said last night that I was a *mere boy*. I've made a few inquiries and I find that I'm a year and a half older than you are. You are the sweetest sixteen a fellow ever saw. I've thought you so for a long time. I wish you would promise to be sweeter to me than to anyone else for always. You know what I mean. Will you? I've only three years more at college. Will you wait for me?

Yours anxiously,

CARL.

Why, he has proposed—actually proposed! My first proposal! It isn't a bit like what I thought it would be. I expected the paper would be scorched by burning words or something like that, and he doesn't even say he is in love with me. Let me see—what does he say? "You are the sweetest sixteen"—Sixteen! I shall be eighteen next May! The idea! Kathryn was twenty when she had her first chance. I can't be in love. I haven't one of her symptoms. She used to spend all her time writing letters or watching for the postman. How papa used to tease her and talk about his son-in-law just to see her blush, and mamma plumed herself as if she were proud of her eldest's conquest. Cousin Tom used to hide and listen to their love-making and report it all faithfully to miserable me. I thought Kathryn the most important, most-to-be-envied person

in the whole world. Finally I asked Tom if he didn't think he ought to propose to me, but he said, "Don't be a gosling!" Mamma said my turn would come, well it has! No one seems to have observed it approaching. Papa never says, with a twinkle in his eye, "Is Mr. Converse coming this evening?" and mamma never suggests sweetly, "Jane, why not wear your pretty blue with blush roses to-night." In fact, nobody realizes that I'm in the matrimonial market. They will persist in thinking I'm a baby in long clothes and socks. It is so trying to be the youngest.

Suppose I should accept him. He would go to papa and say, "Mr. Trumbell, I've called to ask for your daughter Jenny's hand in marriage."

Fancy papa's face! He would exclaim, "What, what! Jenny, my little Jane! Nonsense, nonsense! Why my boy, she's nothing but a child. Couldn't think of letting her marry for ten years or more!". I wonder if Carl would have the courage to argue it out with him.

Then if mamma's eyes were opened to my possibilities, how she would cry over her baby Jane and say, "Why, she was a child only yesterday!"

And I—what am I going to say? By all the established precedents, I'm not a bit in love with

Carl, but then I'm not in love with anyone else. Wait three years for him? In three years I will be twenty. I've heard very sound reasons advanced for not marrying until one is nearly thirty. I overheard one of Kathryn's friends, it was Sara Stuart, talking about early marriages, and she didn't believe in them. She said that one missed all the fun there was in life, and grew old long before one's time. Kathryn afterwards remarked to mamma that it was lucky Sara thought as she did since she was twenty-eight and had no prospect of marrying. I noticed, though, that Kathryn has—yes, wrinkles, deep lines about her mouth, while Sara's face is as smooth as mine. I wonder if I have any lines. No—no—not a hint of one. I suppose one might come there where that dimple is, but I don't see how.

Well, every thing seems to go into the scale against my accepting Carl. Papa and mamma would prefer to keep me shaking a rattle. I'm not in love, and I should like all the fun there is to be had, and no lines.

Another thing, I can't endure Dr. St. John. Mamma wouldn't think Carl and I were securely bound unless Dr. St. John tied the knot. He was simply brutal at Kathryn's wedding. She had scruples about "and to obey." She asked him

not to insist upon her saying it because she knew she should do just as she had a mind to after she was married, and she didn't like to tell a falsehood. Well, when they reached that point in the service, he said, "To love, cherish, and to obey—"

Kathryn repeated, "To love and cherish—"

"And to obey," he insisted, and he said it over four times until poor Kathryn had to repeat it to avoid a regular scene. I was furious, and I vowed I'd never be married while there was any chance of his conducting things. If I wait until I'm twenty-eight, we may have another rector.

If Carl weren't so jealous, we might be secretly engaged, but just picture the air of proprietorship he would wear about. The banns would be published, on the strength of his manner, in next week's social column. One might suggest a long engagement until I was twenty-eight. How many years would that be,—eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, five, six, seven, eight—ten years. If he really cares, he ought to be able to wait that long.

Dear me! where's my pen? I must answer his letter. He may be watching for the postman as Kathryn did. What shall I say—

DEAR CARL:—You ask me to wait three years for you—

can you wait ten for me? I will not marry until I am twenty-eight. Truly,

JENNY.

P. S. I shall be eighteen next May.

J. T. T.

* * * * *

May 5, 1894.

Father is going to dine with old Mr. Stuart. I shall be alone all this evening. What a storm! That shutter is distracting. It must be closed. Oh—how dreary! There, Mr. Shutter, an end to your mischief. You were very disturbing. How the wind blows. It is as if March had pushed April aside and was determined to sweep May out of existence. Oh—I'm lonely! I could have gone to Kathryn's. She might have sent for me, but no—better not. She was unkind yesterday. I've been brooding over what she said. That must be why I'm so downcast. She said—she said that I was growing intolerably old-maidish. It was rather cruel. It made me wince painfully. Her manner implied so much. It left me so alone. To have an—an unmarried sister seems to her as great a misfortune as to have an imbecile or a lunatic or a black sheep in the family. Her husband seems to be watching for me to develop some extraordinary eccentricities. I'm sure he

makes me a butt of ridicule. I serve as a simile for anything that is outlandish or weazened. If I were to make some antediluvian fashion my inseparable companion, and wear cork-screw curls, they would think I personified the inevitable and be resigned to me. Oh,I'm in such a bitter mood, but why should they imagine that I'm so different. I have as great a capacity for affection and as great an appreciation of love as they. I have as many senses, the same instincts. They may be dormant but they are alive and not to be scorned.

If mother were here, I should not regret. Kathryn said, though, that it was a sorrow to mamma that she must die leaving me unmarried.

Oh how purposeless—purposeless—purposeless!

If I had an art or a profession! How many women have and never miss their mate or recall their dreams. They wed an art. Their achievements are their offspring. They create and are content. But I—I have nothing. Yes, I have father. He has me. I am "baby Jane" to him forever. If he should realize that I am an—am old, it would take all the sweetness out of life. When he is gone, what will there be—what will there be then!

Oh—I am growing morbid. The world is as happy as it is sad. If I search constantly for joy, it can not always elude me.

Oh—oh—that little cry relieved me. It grows dark. The storm is shortening the day. There is a long evening before me. I wish I had something absorbing to read. No—not a thing that is new to me. Why, here's the old album. What funny pictures of Kathryn! Here are mine. What an array, and my age written under each. It is a long time since I've been photographed. Here is one taken when I was seventeen. I wonder if I'm so very, very different now. I've a mind to compare—Just to see if—Can I get it out? Yes, I think I can. There! If it were just a little lighter here—I can see very well, though. Oh—how changed, how changed, how changed! Ugh! It is the ghost of my youth returned to taunt me. I will never, never look again!

"Yes—who is it? What is it? Oh—you, John? What—a letter? Thank you. The lamps? No, not just yet.

The writing is strange. Who can it be from!

DEAR MISS TRUMBELL:—A wanderer begs you to welcome him home. I saw you yesterday, and you seemed as sweet to me as you did long ago. Once you bid me wait ten years for you. Many more than ten have passed since then. Have I waited in vain? Will you promise now to be "sweeter to me than to any one else" all the rest of our lives? I will call this evening, and if you will only see me, it shall mean "yes" to me.

CARLOS CONVERSE.

Oh!—how you startled me, John. What? Dinner is served—oh. Very well. John, you may light the lamps, and John, if anyone calls you may say that—say I'm " at home."

L. of C.

A FRAGMENT

A Fragment.

THIS brush seems made of lead. Strange, yesterday that bit of drapery there looked blue. To-day it is aflame, and yet I know—I'll ask that little English copyist. She has kind eyes. No—no, I must not. They will say, "Why does he paint if he is color-blind? He should make way for such as can paint." They do not know the Queen bought my Carpaccio. Three years—how long ago!

That burning—blue. My memory says blue, my eyes see—strange, strange! It must be last night's watching—last night and the night before, and the night before that. When did I—I'm glad I have forgotten how to sleep. To-night and to-morrow night—by then he may be well. Oh Holy Mother, save him for us, save him!

I made Edita rest last night. She is so afraid. Her heart is breaking. She sobbed through all her sleep. She needs good wine. It would give strength to keep up. Perhaps I can take some to her. Who knows, I may have fifty lire to-night. Then I need not paint for a little time—not until

he is well. Blessed Mother, my hand prays with every stroke of this brush on your dear face, prays as my lips pray, as I pray to you in my heart!

When the little hands begin copying my old pictures again, then I shall know he is well—our beautiful boy, Edita's and mine. He is a true artist. We know it. We can see it in his eyes. Holy Mother, they are like the babe's on your knee. One can see the soul in them.

How the colors waver! I must paint carefully. Can that be crimson? I'm sure I did not notice it before. How did Battoni reach that shade. I can not—I can not! Perhaps I need yellow. It is like looking at a flame. It scorches my eyes. This is an endless task! Yesterday I could see room for but twenty strokes more by the morning light. The sun must be far on toward the West, and still it is unfinished. These brushes hinder. Had the signora known, she might have had a better picture. Had she known I wished to be honest, she might have paid a few lire in advance. What would it matter to her? What would it not have meant to us! Oh Edita! Oh my boy—my boy! To-night, to-night! I will go to the English doctor. That is best. They say his cures are like miracles.

The signora may come to-day. She may wish

to compare my picture with the original before I deliver it to her. Well—but a few touches more. How uncertain I am! One's heart must be in the work or one can not even copy, and my heart—my soul is by my boy, my poor sick boy, and with Edita, Edita. Oh, I can see her! She is following him as he tosses from side to side. She creeps to him. She leans on her arms and watches him. There is such agony in her eyes. Oh my heart! my heart! The flesh is worn from her elbows where she has leaned on them over him. She would not touch food if we had it. Oh—I can see nothing, nothing but Edita and our boy—them and a crimson flame!

If the signora comes,she may see how accurately I have drawn, how true my color is. She may say what the Queen said of my Carpaccio. She may say, " Paint me that Guido. Paint me that Van Dyck." Then she will give me my fifty lire. Ten minutes, perhaps fifteen, and I shall be at home. The English doctor will be by our boy. I shall make Edita drink the wine I bring her. I shall see hope come into her eyes. Then, when I have painted the Guido for the signora, we may go to the country for a day—Edita,our boy and I. Ah—there is the signora! Just a stroke more. That blue—crimson drapery—if that would only look right!

* * * * *

There is my copyist, Estelle. There—painting that Madonna by Battoni. Lovely thing, isn't it? Come and look at it. He must be nearly through. Copies of the old masters usually make one heart-sick, but they say this man does exceptionally well. Margaret told me about him. She saw him at work somewhere. She always notices people, you know. What did you say? Looks ghastly? So he does. What is the matter with the man! Oh—how you startled me! What nonsense. That must be a natural pallor. These Italians are so hungry looking. Ugh! He makes me uncomfortable. I hope he won't do so ominous a thing as to die while he is doing my picture. It would prostrate me nervously, you know. Come and tell me what you think of it, Estelle.

Good-day, signore. Is the copy ready for me? Oh no—I see it is not. I expected you would be through with it to-day. You disappoint me, signore. I beg pardon, I don't understand you. It *is* finished! It is finished, you say? Estelle, come here! Look at this painting. The man says that it is completed—ready for me. He hopes I am satisfied, and says that he has done his best to please me. Is he crazy or am I blind? Look, Estelle! Tell me—is this Maddona like

that Madonna? Is this child like that child? Why, he has painted the manger in flames! What do you mean, signore? I do not comprehend you. Are you trying to improve on Battoni, or have you touched up an old effort of your own for my edification? How stupidly you look at me! Look at your copy, signore. Is it possible that you can not see the differences? Battoni's Madonna looks down with a face full of sweet rapture, yours is full of misery. That child is full of life, yours looks like death.

Ah—! Signora! You have spoken it! I—I—my eyes—I—Last night I—my boy, signora, is dying — perhaps — I don't know. I have painted—I see now—I have painted him as I saw him last night, as I have seen him for a week, as I see him now; and—I—signora, I have painted the Holy Mother as I see Edita, as I see my wife watching, watching over him. I don't know signora, how I could do it. I am very accurate always. Perhaps you do not know the Queen has my Carpaccio. If—if the signora will be so kind, I will correct carefully my work. It would be a great misfortune to lose—the opportunity. This year has been a hard one for us. Believe me, signora I will paint faithfully. I will not think of them. When one has a sick boy one must work

to save him. I can paint truly and quickly, signora—

Edita! Edita! What is it? Why do you come? Speak to me! Our boy—is he—Look, signora! Her face tells you—my boy—my boy is dead!

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